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HOOTETSU NO HANA

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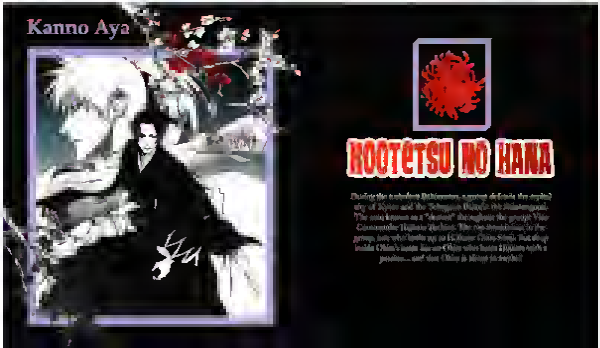

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長鴻出版獨步女性漫畫！

KOOTETSU NO HANA

by Kanno Aya

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KOOTETSU NO HANA.....5
LIKE A FLOWER.....186

KOOTETSU NO HANA
THE FLOWER BLOOMED,
IT BLOOMED!
THE RED FLOWER,
...

凍鐵之花
KOOTETSU NO HANA

*TRANSLATION NOTE: 1864
"Bakumatsu"... First Year of the Genji Era*, Kyoto.
—ARE YOU WITH THE SHINSEN-GUMI?!
*TRANSLATION NOTE: SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT
In these turbulent times the Shinsen-gumi, made up of warriors loyal to the Bakufu, patrol the city...
PARDON ME—
Tokugawa Bakufu* has been thrown into chaos by internal strife and schisms.
COULD YOU LET ME THROUGH PLEASE —?
I HAVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO—

THERE SEEMS TO BE A FIRE AHEAD... IS IT OKAY TO IGNORE IT?
AND BESIDES, IT'S THE DUTY OF THE SHINSENGUMI TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF KYOTO
DOGS OF THE BAKUFU!!
Uh-oh...
Heh...
I GUESS YOU COULD CALL US THE GUARD DOGS OF THE BAKUFU.
SOUJI.
WHAT'S A CAPTAIN OF THE SHINSENGUMI... DOING HERE JUST STANDING AROUND?
SLIDE
SAME GOES FOR YOU... VICE COMMANDER.
I HAD PRIVATE BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.
HIJIKATA.
I WASN'T ACTUALLY SLACKING OFF,
I JUST HEARD THERE WAS A FIRE, SO I WAS A BIT WORRIED
AFTER ALL, THE CITIZENS OF KYOTO FEAR FIRES ...

KILL!
THE HEAVEN'S
CAN BE SO CRUEL.
SFX NOTE: STAB

I APOLOGIZE FOR FIGHTING OUTSIDE OF YOUR STORE.
NO...
IT'S ALL BECAUSE THE SHINSENGUMI PROTECTS US FROM VAGRANT RONINS THAT WE CAN LIVE PEACEFULLY ...
falls
AH, NO, I AVOIDED CAUSING FATAL INJURIES —
FLINCH
...ARE ...ARE THEY ALL DEAD ...?
Okita Souji's sudden strike is awesome, right? ♡
YES...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME ANYONE'S SAID SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO ME ♡
THOSE WERE THREE AMAZING STRIKES.
ST
AB

FLOWER.
NO.
DON'T COME OUT .. STOP!
THE TIME HAS NOT COME YET.
KILL HIM!
THE BRIGHT RED
... KILL ...
FLOWER ...
— STOP ..
SEX NOTE. SHAKI

THE TIME IS SOON.
SOUJI?
SORRY.
I WASN'T ABLE TO AVOID DEALING A FATAL WOUND.
AGAIN
HIM?
!
...
WE'VE COMBED THE WHOLE CITY.
BRING THOSE RONIN TO THE POLICE STATION.
GO HELP.
Oh, okay.
DWNFOLK

WHEN I WAS YOUNG—
THAT'S THE RED SPIDER LILY,
THANK GOODNESS, THE FIRE DIDN'T SPREAD—
HE SAID, "SINCE THE RED SPIDER LILY LOOKS LIKE A FLAME, IT'S VERY UNLUCKY."
AND SAID, "THERE IS GOING TO BE A FIRE"
MY FATHER SAW THESE GROWING IN OUR YARD,
I WAS JUST FOUR-YEARS-OLD THEN... OUR FAMILY WAS VERY POOR.
BUT FATHER WAS PROUD TO BE A BUSHI*.
*TRANSLATION NOTE: WARRIOR
-Ha ha
HOW NOSTALGIC
YES.
FATHER
Ah, wait for me!!
...
AND THAT LED TO ME BECOMING THE NOBLE BUSHI AMONG BUSHI I AM NOW...
AND HE ALWAYS TOLD ME, "YOU HAVE TO LIVE LIKE A BUSHI"
...

MY BELOVED FATHER
— FATHER DISAPPEARED
FATHER WHERE DID HE GO? WHERE?
LISTEN,
YOUR FATHER DIDN'T DISAPPEAR,
HE PASSED AWAY FROM AN ILLNESS,
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
THE BRIGHT RED FLOWER ...
BUT THAT RED SPIDER LILY—
THAT ONE JUST COULDN'T WAIT...
IT'S NOT EVEN SUMMER YET AND THAT FLOWER HAS ALREADY BLOOMED
DOES IT WANT TO WITHER SOON?
THE FRESH BLOOD RED COLOR ...
JUST LIKE FRESH BLOOD
THIS MAN ... KNOWS NO FEAR.
JUST LIKE THE ONE INSIDE ME —
THE "MONSTER" WHO'S STARTING TO AWAKEN ...

Ignore him
HARADA'S LOST IT AGAIN
HOW CAN KYOTO BE THIS HOT?!
IT'S SO HOT ~~~!!
DON'T WE HAVE ANYTHING HAPPY TO DISCUSS?
CAPTAIN HARADA!
chime chime
chime chime
Huh?
HARADA!
OH.
NAGAKURA!
TOUDOU!
*TRANSLATION NOTE: SEE TRANSLATION NOTE PAGE
Are you serious? Captain!
Almost the season for the Gion* Festival, right? ♡
SOUJI ...
IT'S ALMOST ...
HOW COULD I WORK WHEN THE WHOLE TOWN IS SO FESTIVE?!
WE MIGHT AS WELL SUSPEND SHINSENGUMI DUTIES DURING THE MAIN EVENTS.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
Shinsengumi Headquarters

...FEST....
FESTIVAL... WHAT IS THAT...?
What's the matter?
*HIS FULL NAME IS SAITOU HAJIME
yay
WE HAVE TO DRINK SAKE, SING SONGS, AND HAVE LOTS OF FUN!
Souji, Harada, Nagakura, Toudou and Saitou are all in this group
Commander
Vice Commander
Assistant Vice Commanders
Accountants
Spies
Regular Soldiers
The Shinsengumi Hierarchy at the time
...SAITOU, DO YOU WANT GO TO THE FESTIVAL?
Where!
...?
Gyah
What?
CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT, HAJI-KUN?!
MUST BE TOUGH TO BE SO SERIOUS ALL THE TIME
Like a corpse
Ha Ha
HA HA HA, HARADA, THAT'S NOT FUNNY
ENOUGH
*TRANSLATION NOTE *SAMURAI CODE
IT VIOLATES THE "DON'T DEVIATE FROM THE BUSHIDO*" ARTICLE OF OUR CODE—
LET'S BE REALISTIC HERE.
VICE
AND WE'D ALL BE FORCED TO COMMIT SEPPUKU**.
IF HIJIKATA FINDS OUT THAT WE'RE PLANNING TO DITCH WORK TO ENJOY THE FESTIVAL—
*TRANSLATION NOTE **SUICIDE BY SLICING YOUR STOMACH OPEN. NOT FUN! DX

... CALL THE SPY UNIT OVER IMMEDIATELY.
...
YES SIR.
—YOU SUSPECT A PLOT, AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE CALLING THE SPY UNIT TOGETHER?
THAT MERCHANT ...
EH?
WHAT HAPPENED?
I SUSPECT HE'S AN ENEMY.
YOUR "SUDDEN STRIKE" IS TOO FAST FOR NORMAL PEOPLE TO FOLLOW... THEY USUALLY ONLY SEE IT ONCE, RIGHT?
BUT HE SAW "THREE STRIKES".
... YOU'RE INJURED?
HIJIKATA ...
I'VE BEEN INVESTIGATING PRIOR TO THIS...

HOWEVER WE HAVE ENOUGH PROOF NOW
THAT MERCHANT — MASUYA KIEMON,
THAT'S A WASTE OF TIME,
I'M NOT EVEN CERTAIN OF WHEN THOSE CRIMINALS CAME OUT OF THE STORE —
AREN'T YOU PUTTING THE SPY UNIT TO SHAME?
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THE VICE COMMANDER TO GO OUT HIMSELF.. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS ALONE
— HONESTLY,
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SETTING OUT TO JOIN A KID'S FIGHT
THIS PERSON
THAT BASTARD MUST BE
HATCHING SOME NEFARIOUS PLOT
AH!
DRIP...
... HUH?
YOU'RE RIGHT
YES,
ISN'T A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP
BUT THE STERN, SILENT, AND COLD-BLOODED VICE COMMANDER ACTUALLY HAVING THIS TYPE OF PERSONALITY,

Freetalk:

New readers and old fans alike, greetings. This is my second book in the "Shinsengumi Stories" series, but please regard this as unrelated to "Hakodate Shinsengumi", as it's a different story. There's a lot of history in here, and a lot of historical figures make appearances, this is their story. Everyone, please continue giving me your support.

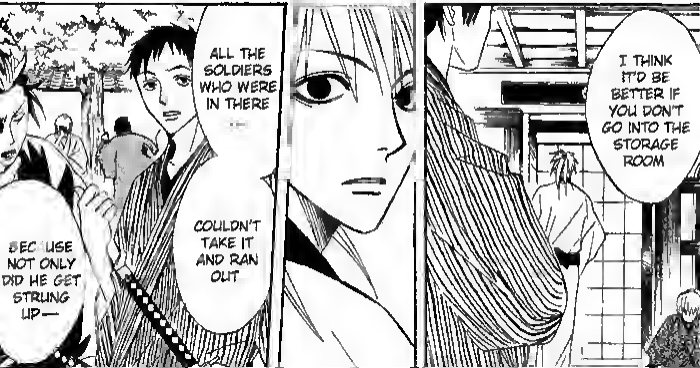
!?
thud
SOU
...
...
WHO?
WHO ARE YOU?
...
OKITA SOUJI,
I'M ANOTHER SIDE OF HIM.

I WAS BORN FOR THE PURPOSE OF KILLING YOU.
AWAKEN
JUST WAIT AND SEE, HIJIKATA!
...
WHEN THE TIME COMES,
I WILL DEFINITELY..
AT THAT MOMENT...
STRUGGLE
—BUT,
...THE TIME HAS YET TO COME.

— MASUYA KIEMON,
TELL ME THE TRUTH!
HEY!
COME LOOK AT THIS.
SO MANY WEAPONS, DO THEY WANT TO START A BATTLE?!
...THAT TIME —
— REAL NAME,
FURUTAKA SHUNTARO.
WHAT ...
IS HE PLANNING —?
THE TIME MY MIND BLANKED OUT ...
HIJIKATA SAID NOTHING HAPPENED

"WAIT UNTIL A STRONG WIND BLOWS"
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
THIS IS A CODED MESSAGE SENT TO YOU, RIGHT?
WE ALREADY KNOW YOU'RE A SONNO JOI WARRIOR.
SO WHAT ...?
—AND ...
I DON'T WANT TO RESORT TO TORTURE!
WE MIGHT BE ON DIFFERENT SIDES, BUT WE ARE ALL BUSHI.
COMMANDER KONDO.
WHAT ARE THOSE WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES FOR? YOU GUYS ARE PLANNING SOMETHING! TELL ME WHERE YOUR COMRADES ARE HIDING!
YOU'RE ALREADY IN THIS CONDITION. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN STILL HOLD OUT?
I'M NOT SURE
FURU-TAKA!!
STRIKE

PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME.
→ TIE HIM UP.
THIS KIND OF WORK SHOULD BE LEFT TO ME.


ALL THE SOLDIERS WHO WERE IN THERE
COULDN'T TAKE IT AND RAN OUT
BECAUSE NOT ONLY DID HE GET STRUNG UP—
I THINK IT'D BE BETTER IF YOU DON'T GO INTO THE STORAGE ROOM

THAT'S NOT SOMETHING A HUMAN COULD DO.
HE'S ALSO GOTTEN FIVE-INCH NAILS DRIVEN INTO HIS FEET.
AND CANDLES HAVE BEEN PLACED ON THOSE NAILS AND THE MELTING WAX IS DRIPPING DOWN IT.
THAT MAN IS STRICT LIKE A DEMON IN ORDER TO FOLLOW OUR CODE.
BUT HE'S A REAL "DEMON" INSIDE TOO.
UH
AAAH
BECAUSE HE'S NOT A BUSHI, HE CAN DO THESE THINGS!
HIJIKATA AND KONDO AREN'T
FOOLS
FOOLISH
BASTARDS
WHO DIDN'T REALIZE
THAT THEY AREN'T WITH THE TIMES
HUH..
AREN'T REAL BUSHI, SO THEY CAN DO THESE LOWLY THINGS!
UGH
AH

YOU'RE EXAGGERATING —
GRAB
FOR THIS COUNTRY ...
FOR THE PEOPLE ...
THIS COUNTRY IS CHANGING,
AND WE'RE CHANGING ALONG WITH IT.
NO MATTER HOW MANY EXCUSES YOU COME UP WITH,
IN THE END, AS LONG AS BOTH SIDES ARE WIELDING SWORDS...
THEY CAN BE UTTERLY ELIMINATED.

NO,
HIJIKATA, HE...
HM?
Actually, he's
a very gentle person
— BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY THERE.
HOW TROUBLING
YES, EVEN THOUGH HE IS OUR ENEMY, WE ARE ALL BUSHI*
*TRANSLATION NOTE WARRIORS
I can understand Sis's pain... so I didn't say anything selfish.
Now that I think about it, with so many mouths to be fed, it was inevitable we were too poor.
WE CAN'T BE TOGETHER ANYMORE,
YOU MUST GO TO KONDO-SENSEI. AND WORK HARD AT STUDYING SWORDSMANSHIP
OK, SIS.
...I don't remember much from the day anymore when I snapped out of my daze. It was already nighttime and I was lost.
SIS ...
OUR DECEASED MOTHER,
FATHER ...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S VERY LONELY,
I HAVE TO WALK ON MY OWN.
AH ...

Now... I can only continue onwards.

*TRANSLATION NOTE: THE LOCATION OF THE TENNEN RISHINRYUU DOJO OF KONDO ISAMI IN SHINJUKU, TOKYO

N-NOT AT ALL
I'M SCARED TOO.
...ARE YOU SCARED?
EX-CUSE ME
...That's
LET'S
extending into the darkness
WALK TOGETHER.
a single path of light
pointing out the way...
for someone with nothing in the world like me
SOUJI,
WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?
MY
DREAM?

I WANT TO BECOME A BUSHI
THEN MAKE KONDO-SENSEI BECOME A TRUE GENERAL
WHY... WOULD A FARMER'S SON WANT TO BECOME A BUSHI ...?
SUCH AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM... WHY DOES HE BELIEVE HE CAN ACHIEVE IT?
And then ...
JUST LIKE ME, HE LOST HIS PARENTS AS A CHILD.
HE SHOULD BE LONELY LIKE ME ... YET HE HAS A DREAM.
that light so piercing it burns the eye...
... MY DREAM... MY REASON FOR MOVING FORWARD IS ...?
RIGHT ... I HAVE A SWORD.
TO CONTINUE ON THE LONELY PATH OF THE SWORD —
THEN I WILL USE THIS SWORD —
TO CARVE OUT THE ROAD TO YOUR DREAM.

Because your dream is my dream.
DURING THE GION MATSURI —
ON A WINDY DAY, THEY WILL SET FIRE TO THE CITY,
DURING THE CONFUSION, THEY WILL KIDNAP THE EMPEROR AND KILL ALL OPPOSING OFFICIALS AND DAIMYO—
DID HE TALK?
REALLY? IF THEY DO SO KYOTO WILL BE RAZED TO THE GROUND
WE MUST HURRY.
THE NEWS OF FURUTAKA'S CAPTURE WILL FORCE THEM TO MOVE THEIR PLAN UP.
— QUICKLY SEND TROOPS TO PROTECT THE EMPEROR!
HIJIKATA,
IT'S NOT JUST THE FOOT SOLDIERS ...
EVEN YOUR FORMER COMRADES ARE CALLING YOU "DEMON"

— IN ORDER TO PROTECT KYOTO,
AND IN ORDER TO MANAGE THE BIRTH, NATURE, AND GOALS OF A GROUP OF SOLDIERS,
ONE MUST BECOME A "DEMON"... I UNDERSTAND THIS
BUT YOU ...
CAN'T POSSIBLY BE UN-AFFECTED
Because you especially
MY WISH IS FOR KONDO-SENSEI ...
TO WALK A BRIGHT, SUNLIT PATH,
FOR THAT... I AM WILLING TO BE THE "SHADOW" UNDER THE SUN.
You are gentler than anyone
SOUJI
SOMEONE HAS TO DO IT ...
SO IT MIGHT AS WELL BE ME
That's right

For you, I am willing to risk this life!
I will crush your enemies until none are left.
JI ...
SOUJI ...
. . A DREAM?
NOT A DREAM ... THIS IS YOUR INNER MIND.
YOUR ...
OTHER SELF —
IT'S ME, SOUJI.
HOW IS IT POSSIBLE —?
I'M NOT LYING.

*TRANS. NOTE: THIS IS HIS OFFICIAL, INACCURATE RECORDS SAY SOUJI'S FATHER DIED WHEN HE WAS ARJUND 2 & YEARS OLD.

YES I HEARD SOMEONE SAW HIM AT ODENMACHO.
FATHER?!
I HEARD KATSUJIRO WAS RETURNING TO EDO.
...WHAT...?
YOU WERE ONLY NINE AT THE TIME,
HURRY AND REMEMBER...
I CAN SEE FATHER?
FATHER!
SO WHILE PRETENDING TO VISIT THE KONDOS, YOU ACTUALLY WENT TO ODENMACHO, RIGHT?
ACTUALLY, I HEARD A RUMOR
THE DAY BEFORE IT HAPPENED? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
I PLAN TO SEND MY BROTHER TO STUDY AT KONDO'S DOJO.
I'M WORRIED, I DON'T KNOW IF THAT CHILD WILL STUDY HARD

AND THAT TIME YOU SAW —
— YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER, DO YOU?
DURING THE TIMES I SURFACE, YOU LOSE YOUR MEMORY.
..YOU'RE LYING!
FLOWER
HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY ...?
HIJIKATA ...
NO WAY ...
BECAUSE OF A SMALL DISAGREEMENT HE STRUCK DOWN YOUR FATHER. THAT MAN IS A DEMON. YOUR FAITH IN HIM IS UNFOUNDED
LIAR!!

BRIGHT RED FLOWER
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A LONG TI...
JUST BEFORE HIS DREAM BECOMES A REALITY.
WAITING FOR THE CHANCE TO EXACT VENGEANCE IN STYLE.
AT THAT MOMENT I WILL ...
KILL
HIJIKATA.
I AM ...
WITH THESE TWO HANDS, I'LL DESTROY MY FATHER'S ENEMY.
LITTERLY
THE TIME HAS ALMOST COME.
HELPLESS NOW.
THAT MOMENT
IS ABOUT TO COME ...

*TRANSLATION NOTE: REBEL SOLDIERS WHO WANTED TO RESTORE THE EMPEROR TO POWER.
AND SEARCH THE EAST B..NK FOR INNS THE CHOSHU RONIN* MIGHT BE ST..YING IN.
SAITOU, HARADA, AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW HIJIKATA —
STARTING NOW, OKITA, NAGAKURA, TOUDOU, AND TEN OTHERS WILL COME WITH ME TO SEARCH THE WEST BANK OF THE KAMO RIVER.
— OUR FORCES WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS,
***TRANSLATION NOTE: U..ON DISCOVERY OF THE PLOT, CAPTAIN KONDO SENT A MESSAGE TO MATSUDAIRA KATAMORI OF AIZU FOR BACK U.., BUT DID NOT WAIT FOR THE REINFORCEMENTS TO ARRIVE
YEAH, HOPE WE CAN FINISH SOON SO WE CAN JOIN HIJIKATA.
WE'RE PROBABLY NOT JOINING UP WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS FROM AIZU*** DUE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN NUMBERS
ONCE THIS CASE IS RESOLVED
THIS MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE THE BIGGEST CATCH SINCE THE START OF THE SHINSENGUMI ...!
**TRANS..TION NOTE: FIRST DAY OF THE MAJOR PARADES DURING THE GION MATSURI
I DOUBT WE'LL BE ABLE TO LOCATE THE ENEMY—
TONIGHT'S THE YOIYAMA** OF THE GION MATSURI.
FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO THE FESTIVAL AT ALL.

THEN, EVERYONE WILL SEE
THE NAME "SHINSENGUMI" WILL RESOUND THROUGHOUT THE NATION!
EXCUSE ME,
AT THE MOMENT IT'S REALIZED,
THAT IS HIJIKATA'S DREAM.
WE NEED TO SEARCH YOUR ROOMS.
THAT WE ARE
TRUE BUSHI
IKEDA
CLATTER
— RECAPTURE FURUTAKA, SET FIRE TO THE VICINITY,
AND WIPE OUT THE SHINSENGUMI
HEY ...
DID YOU GUYS ... HEAR SOME-THING?

CHANGE OF PLANS !!!
WE REALLY FOUND THEM!
NO WAY ...
CUT DOWN ALL REBELS AND SHOW NO MERCY!
DON'T COME!
BEFORE THAT HAPPENS,
I WILL —

HIJIKATA, DON'T COME—
thump
MAN,
NOT HERE EITHER
WE'VE SEARCHED THE WHOLE EAST BANK,
WHY HAVEN'T WE HEARD FROM KONDO-SENSEI YET?
WHERE ARE THEY ...?
VICE CAPTAIN ...!
I HEAR SOMETHING.
SFX NOTE: SLASH
HYAH!
CLANK
CLANK
SFX NOTE: BLOCK
SFX NOTE: SLICE

HUFF ...
HUFF ...
HIJIKATA ...
SFX NOTE: THUN...
DID YOU ... DID YOU REALLY KILL FATHER ...
WHY
I ... I'LL
SFX NOTE: BADUMP
!
I WILL ...
KILL HIJIKATA

SOUJI
...
SFX NOTE STAB STAB STAB
BLINK
SOUJI
!!!

HE'S ALREADY DEAD.
HIJIKATA...!!!
— YOUR WOUND...
I WAS WEARING A MAIL, SO I WASN'T CUT DEEPLY
IT JUST REOPENED MY OLD WOUND.
WHY WOULD YOU...
IF... FOR MY SAKE...
RISKING YOUR DREAM...
— YOU SAID BEFORE...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF IT WAS RUINED...?
THAT YOU WOULD CARVE OUT THE ROAD TO MY DREAM...
SO WITHOUT YOU,
HOW WOULD I GO ON?

THE ONE WHO COULDN'T GO ON
IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU!
SFX NOTE: BARUMP
HIJIKATA ...
THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS!
— UGH!
THE TIME ...
gulp
THE TIME HAS COME ...
WOULD BE ME
THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.
STOP IT..
DON'T COME OUT ...
... AH!

WHY ARE YOU STOPPING ME...?
HE'S THE ONE WHO MURDERED YOUR FATHER!
STOP IT!
STOP IT ALREADY!!!
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY STOP ME.
UWAAAH!
SOUJI ...?!
SFX NOTES: BADUMP
SOUJI ...
...
ARE YOU ... THE OTHER SOUJI?

SFX NOTE: SLASH
WHY ...?
YOU FORGOT ...
THIRTEEN YEARS AGO ...
WHY ...?
HE WAS MY
FATHER!
THE MAN YOU KILLED —

I CAN'T
DIE JUST YET ...
SOUJI!!
EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE ...
...
SFX NOTE: BADUM
誠
ARE YOU STILL WILLING TO GO DOWN WITH ME?
IF THAT'S THE CASE,
WHETHER IT'S THE PAST OR THE REASON
DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WAS A LIE AND WHAT WAS THE TRUTH
FATHER
SORRY,

SOUJI
IT WOULD BE TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE.
I...
IS THAT YOUR
YES.
ANSWER, SOUJI ?!
WHAT THE @#%* DOES ME WISH FOR IT DON'T CARE AT ALL.
IF YOU ASKED ME WHAT MY WISH WAS
I WON'T BURDEN THAT ANYONE
WHEN THAT TIME COMES
AT LEAST FOR THAT MOMENT

AT LEAST FOR THAT MOMENT...
I HOPE I CAN EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TOWARDS THAT FLOWER.
誠

NO,
HIJIKATA, HE...
HM?
Actually, he's a very cowardly person
— BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY THERE.
HOW TROUBLING
YES, EVEN THOUGH HE IS OUR ENEMY, WE ARE ALL BUSHI*
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I can understand Sis's pain... so I didn't say anything selfish.
Now that I think about it, with so many mouths to be fed, it was inevitable we were too poor.
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SIS ...
...I don't remember when from the day anymore. When I snapped out of my daze it was already nighttime... and I was lost.
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AH ...

Now... I can only continue onwards.

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I'M SCARED TOO.
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...That's...
LET'S
extending into the darkness...
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a single path of light
MY....
DREAM?
WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?
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pointing out the way...
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SOUJI.

That's right
SO IT MIGHT AS WELL BE ME
SOMEONE HAS TO DO IT ...

FATHER
...
THE DAY FATHER WAS KILLED BY HIJIKATA
...
... I WAS BORN FROM DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART.
*TRANSLATION NOTE: HIS IS HISTORICALLY INACCURATE. RECORDS SAY SUZUKI'S FATHER DIED WHEN HE WAS AROUND 2-3 YEARS OLD.
YES I HEARD SOMEONE SAW HIM AT ODENMA-CHO.
FATHER?!
I HEARD KATSUJIRO WAS RETURNING TO EDO
YOU WERE ONLY NINE AT THE TIME,
...WHAT...?
HURRY AND REMEMBER...
I CAN SEE FATHER?
FATHER!
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NEITHER AM I.
DURING THE TIMES I SURFACE YOU LOSE YOUR MEMORY.
YOU'RE LYING!
FLOWER
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HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY ...?
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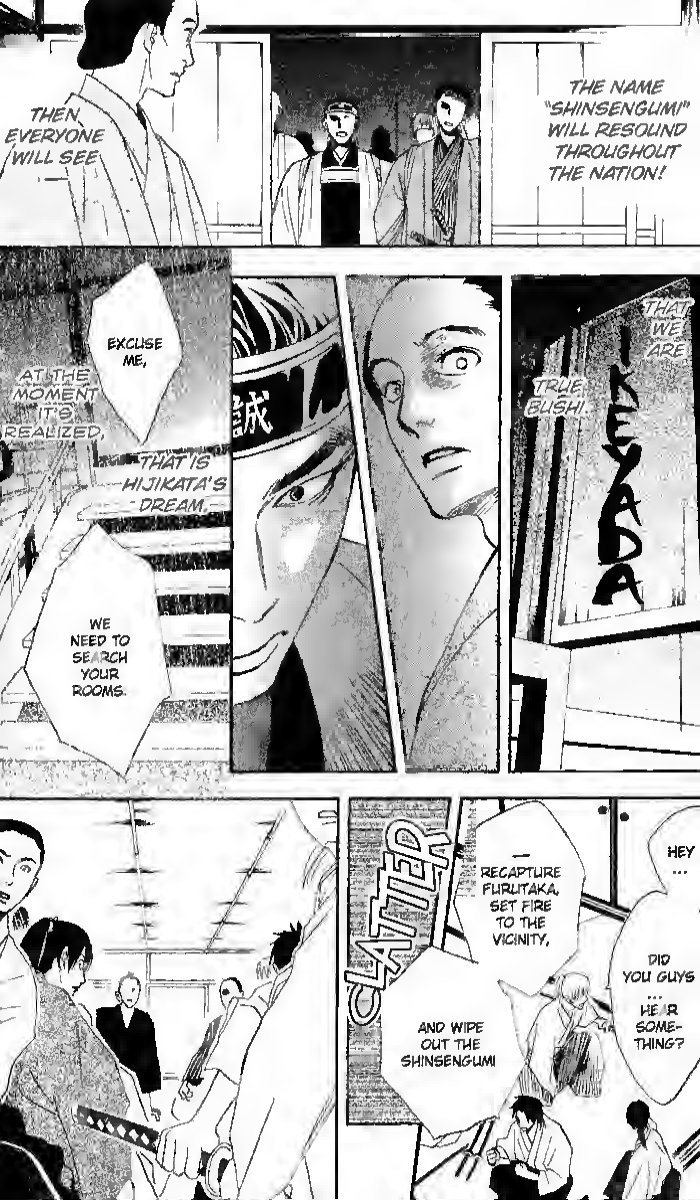
KILL
HIJIKATA.
WITH THESE TWO HANDS, I'LL DESTROY MY FATHER'S ENEMY.
I AM ...
THE TIME HAS ALMOST COME.
UTTERLY HELPLESS NOW.
THAT MOMENT IS BOUT TO COME ...

*TRANSLATION NOTE: IMPERIAL SOLDIERS WHO WANTED TO RESTORE THE EMPEROR TO POWER.
AND SEARCH THE EAST BANK FOR INNS THE CHOSHU RONIN* MIGHT BE STAYING IN.
SAITOU, HARADA, AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW HIJIKATA —
— OUR FORCES WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS,
STARTING NOW, OKITA, NAGAKURA, TOUDOU, AND TEN OTHERS WILL COME WITH ME TO SEARCH THE WEST BANK OF THE KAMO RIVER.
***TRANSLATION NOTE: UPON DISCOVERY OF THE PLOT, CAPTAIN KONDO SENT A MESSAGE TO MATSUDAIRA KATAMORI OF AIZU FOR BACK UP, BUT DID NOT WAIT FOR THE REINFORCEMENTS TO ARRIVE
YEAH, HOPE WE CAN FINISH SOON SO WE CAN JOIN HIJIKATA.
WE'RE PROBABLY NOT JOINING UP WITH THE REINFORCEMENTS FROM AIZU*** DUE TO THE DIFFERENCE IN NUMBERS
ONCE THIS CASE IS RESOLVED...
THIS MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE THE BIGGEST CATCH SINCE THE START OF THE SHINSENGUMI...!
**TRANSLATION NOTE: FIRST DAY OF THE MAJOR PARADES DURING THE GION MATSURI
TONIGHT'S THE YOIYAMA** OF THE GION MATSURI
I DOUBT WE'LL BE ABLE TO LOCATE THE ENEMY—
FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO THE FESTIVAL AT ALL.


THEN, EVERYONE WILL SEE
THE NAME "SHINSENGUMI" WILL RESOUND THROUGHOUT THE NATION!
EXCUSE ME,
AT THE MOMENT IT'S REALIZED,
THAT IS HIJIKATA'S DREAM.
WE NEED TO SEARCH YOUR ROOMS.
誠
IKEDA
THAT WE ARE
TRUE BUSHI.
CLATTER
— RECAPTURE FURUTAKA, SET FIRE TO THE VICINITY,
AND WIPE OUT THE SHINSENGUMI
HEY ...
DID YOU GUYS ... HEAR SOMETHING?

DON'T COME!
I WILL —
BEFORE THAT HAPPENS,
CUT DOWN ALL REBELS AND SHOW NO MERCY!
WE REALLY FOUND THEM!
NO WAY ...
CHANGE OF PLANS !!!

HUFF ...
HUFF ...
HIJIKATA ...
SFX NOTE: THUMP
WHY
DID YOU ... DID YOU REALLY KILL FATHER ...
I WILL
SFX NOTE: BADUMP
I WILL ...
KILL HIJIKATA

SOUJI
...
SFX NOTE: STA... STAB STAB
BLINK
SOUJI
!!!

HE'S ALREADY DEAD.
...
HIJIKATA ...!!!
— YOUR WOUND ...
I WAS WEARING A MAIL, SO I WASN'T CUT DEEPLY.
IT JUST REOPENED MY OLD WOUND.
WHY WOULD YOU ...
IF... FOR MY SAKE ...
RISKING YOUR DREAM ...
— YOU SAID BEFORE ...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF IT WAS RUINED ...?
THAT YOU WOULD CARVE OUT THE ROAD TO MY DREAM ...
誠
SO WITHOUT YOU,
HOW WOULD I GO ON?

THE ONE WHO COULDN'T GO ON
IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU!
SFX NOTE: BADUMP
HIJIKATA ...
THAT'S NOT HOW IT IS!
UGH!
THE TIME ...
BUG
THE TIME HAS COME ...
WOULD BE ME
THE MOMENT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.
STOP IT...
DON'T COME OUT ...
AH!

WHY ARE YOU STOPPING ME--?
HE'S THE ONE WHO MURDERED YOUR FATHER!
STOP IT!
SOUJI...?!
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY STOP ME.
STOP IT ALREADY!!!
UWAAAH!
SFX NOTE: BADUMP
SOUJI...
ARE YOU ... THE OTHER SOUJI?

SFX NOTE: SLASH
WHY ...?
YOU FORGOT ...
THIRTEEN YEARS AGO ...
WHY ...?
HE WAS MY
FATHER!
THE MAN YOU KILLED —

I CAN'T
DIE JUST YET ...
SOUJI!!
EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE ...
...
SFX NOTE: BADUMP
誠
ARE YOU STILL WILLING TO GO DOWN WITH ME?
IF THAT'S THE CASE,
WHETHER IT'S THE PAST OR THE REASONS
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WAS A LIE AND WHAT WAS THE TRUTH.
FATHER,
SORRY,

YES.
WHAT THE OUTCOME WILL BE ... I DON'T CARE AT ALL.
IS THAT YOUR ...
ANSWER, SOUJI ...?!
I...
IT WOULD BE TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE.
SOUJI ...!
IF I DIE —
IF YOU ASKED ME WHAT MY WISH WAS ...
DAMN IT. I WON'T REDRAW THAT ANYMORE!
WHEN THAT TIME COMES,
AT LEAST FOR THAT MOMENT ...

AT LEAST FOR THAT MOMENT ...
I HOPE I CAN EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TOWARDS THAT FLOWER.
誠

Translation Notes:

Gion Matsuri: Gion Festival, one of the most famous festivals in Kyoto, lasting for all of July with three main nights 7/14-16 leading up to one giant parade.

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happy mother's day. everyone!

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